



Preventive Guidelines for **RETAIL INDUSTRY**



**Approved by Indian
Medical Association**



Overview

The COVID-19 has brought the entire world to its knees. It's an unknown enemy that over 200 countries across the globe are trying to protect its citizens from. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), COVID-19 spreads when people touch their eyes and nose after coming in contact with an infected person or contaminated surfaces or objects. Objects get contaminated when droplets from an infected person fall on them through coughing, sneezing or exhalation. It spreads in a manner similar to that of flu.

While, most persons infected with COVID-19 experience mild symptoms and recover, some require serious care. Risk of serious illness rises with age and weak immune system.

Social distancing seems to be the only way to control the spread of this virus. India has taken timely measures to contain the spread of the pandemic including imposing a lockdown.

Experts believe that the pandemic and the lockdown will forever change the way businesses function and consumers behave. Business will have to function while continuing the focus on health and safety of all involved.

Organisations that are prepared for the new reality with a complete SOP will reap the benefits. After re-opening manufacturing units, warehouses, stores and corporate offices post COVID-19 lockdown will be critical for all retail business units. They will have a difficult yet crucial task of ensuring safety and hygiene and instilling confidence in both internal and external customers in every possible way.

To help the Retail Business Units during this critical phase, Retailers Association of India set up a committee of experts represented by eminent members for putting together a set of guidelines for retail sector to follow. Members include –

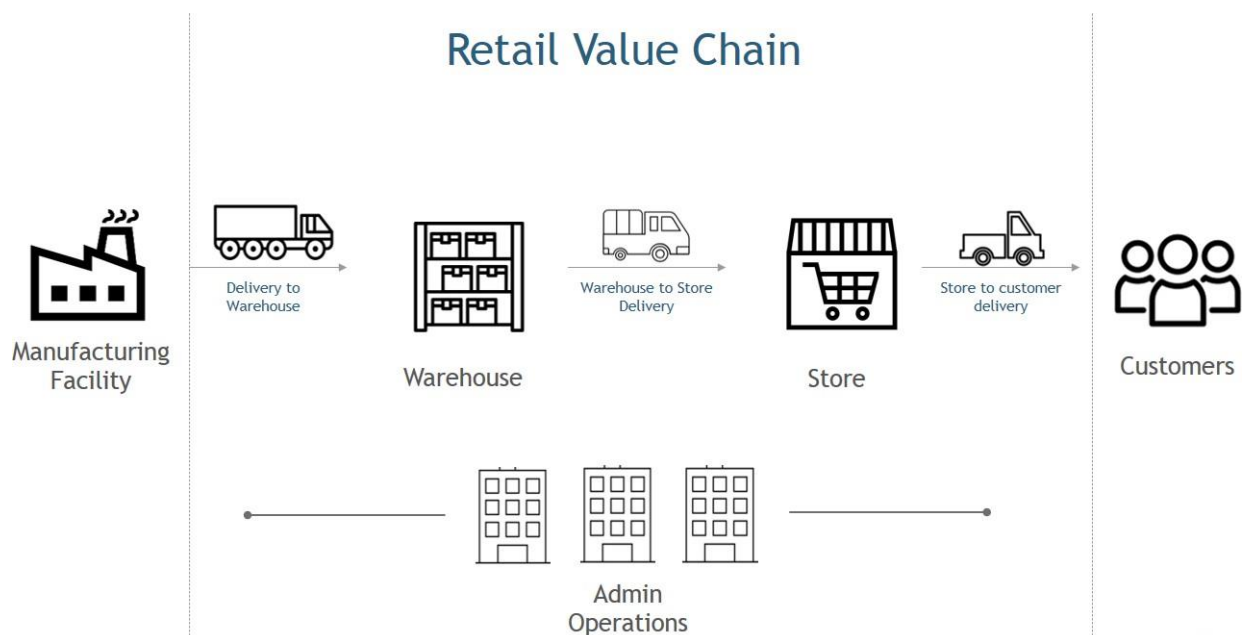
1. Adhir Mane, CHRO - Lifestyle Business –Raymond
2. Chandrashekar Chavan, Chief Human Resources Officer - Apparel & Retail Business, Aditya Birla Group
3. G.R. Venkatesh, Chief Human Resource Officer - Reliance Retail Ltd
4. Priya Gopalakrishnan, Chief Human Resources Officer, Arvind Fashions Limited
5. Priya M Pillai, Head- HR, Retail & Corporate Functions - Titan Industries

6. Swetank Jain, Group Chief People Officer & Chief Communications Officer – Future Group
7. Seema Arora Nambiar, - Vice president - People Resource - Hardcastle Restaurants Pvt. Ltd.
8. Venkatramana B, President - Group HR - Landmark Group India
9. Venkatesh Raja, CHRO – Shoppers Stop Ltd
10. Kumar Rajagopalan, CEO, Retailers Association of India
11. Lawrence Fernandes, Director – Retail Learning & Membership

The objective of these guidelines is to provide a sound strategy for resuming businesses post COVID-19 lockdown. It also provides a framework for social distancing, right sanitization guidelines, workplace norms among others to ensure safety and hygiene for internal and external customers, which will remain of utmost importance.

Special thanks to the Indian Medical Association for helping Indian retail streamline operations in a safe and hygienic manner by rigorously reviewing the guidelines, improving them through their valuable inputs and approving them.

Retailers operate in a variety of functions across the value chain. A typical Retail Value Chain looks like this:



*This is a working document and will be frequently updated to reflect any new directives or recommended practices are introduced or implemented.

MANUFACTURING / WAREHOUSE OPERATIONS

Overall Precautionary Measures

- Provide Thermo-Guns and screen all personnel for fever and cold
- Provide masks to all employees (keep some masks in the spare in case an employee reports to work without a mask).
- Identify a room or area where someone who is feeling unwell or has symptoms can be safely isolated
- Create a Rapid Response Team of at least 2 managers who will monitor employees with infections / symptoms and will take necessary actions
- Empanel a doctor/doctors for health checks
- Get signed self-declarations (**Annexure-VII**) on health conditions by all personnel on a site

Social Distancing Measures

- Cancel all non-critical meetings, recreational activities, locker room access and mock drills
- Ensure that items required to be kept in lockers such as mobile phones should be sanitised before keeping them in and after they are retrieved
- Define maximum occupancy limit for all buildings and enclosed areas
- Increase employee transportation capacity and modes, ensure social distancing while transportation
- Cancel access of visitors to organisation's facilities/premises
- Restrict loading / unloading activities to ensure minimal interaction between personnel
- Space out employee amenities with markings on queue managers
- Stagger shift timings to ensure shifts do not over-lap so that social distancing is maintained at the start/end of shifts

Communication Measures

- Display approved signage across the facility mandating social distancing
- Display labour allocation information across multiple boards at prominent places across the building to avoid crowding
- Use Public Announcement (PA) systems for broadcasting messages reinforcing social distancing mandate
- Keep communicating and promoting the message that people need to stay at home even if they develop even mild symptoms of COVID-19

Sanitization Measures

- Establish protocols and processes for sanitization
- Sanitize all surfaces that are frequently touched at least once every 4 hours
- Ensure availability of Masks, Gloves for individuals engaged in processes where social distancing is not possible
- Ensure smaller shifts to limit exposure
- Put sanitizing hand rub dispensers at prominent places around the workplace. Make sure the dispensers are regularly refilled

DELIVERY / LOGISTICS OPERATIONS

- Tie-up with delivery partners for contactless delivery
- Ensure that company's delivery staff can visit the customer's residence with the products and requisite sanitization materials (mask, gloves, glasses and sanitizers)

Measures for Vendors

- Sanitize stocks when dispatched from warehouse and re-sanitize when accepted at store
- Screen all drivers (temperature check). Also ensure they wear masks and sanitize hands
- Making sure that drivers and loading-unloading staff have access to places where they can wash their hands with soap and water

STORE OPERATIONS

Overall Precautionary Measures

- Provide thermo-guns to screen all personnel for fever and Cold
- Get signed self-declarations (**Annexure-VII**) on health conditions by all personnel on a site
- Identify a room or area where someone who is feeling unwell or has symptoms can be safely isolated
- Create a Rapid Response Team of at least 2 managers who will monitor employees with infections / symptoms and will take necessary actions
- Install no-touch trash bins, instruments such as sneeze guards / protective screens at checkouts/cash counters
- Plan store openings keeping COVID-19 hotspots and non-hotspot areas in mind
 - Opening of stores in COVID-19 hotspots can be delayed. However, the stores in non-hotspots can open post lockdown
- Encourage employees to use their private vehicles while commuting to work. Consider providing fuel allowance
- Encourage quick shopping options like order on phone and pick from outside the store

Ventilation

Ensure that the stores and retail outlets are well ventilated with proper air circulation. Avoid using air conditioners without fresh air intake. In case, that is not possible, follow a mix of the below principles depending on the place and options available.

General guiding principles

- Set the temperature all air conditioning devices in the range of 24-30° c.
- Ensure relative humidity is in the range of 40-70%
- Ensure maximum intake of fresh air by opening of doors and or windows of the store several times during the day.
- Avoid recirculation of air to the extent possible
- Ensure adequate cross ventilation
- Use exhaust fans to facilitate replacement of air by
- Frequently clean and sanitise filters of indoor cooling units to ensure air sanitization
- Ensure that there is no direct contact of air.

Social distancing Measures

- Make floor markings at the tills to ensure social distancing
- Set up prioritized shopping hours for instance one hour every Monday, Wednesday and Friday morning for vulnerable and elderly customers and frontline workers
- Manage stores with minimum number of staff with staggered days as footfall may not be high even after lifting of the lockdown
- Introduce disposable token system to avoid crowding at stores
- Define the maximum customer occupancy inside a store basis the size of the store to ensure a distance of 6 feet between customers and limit contact while queuing

Sanitization Measures

- Install sanitization products, and preventive guideline posters at all entry and exit points
- Disinfect surfaces, including doorknobs, handrails, the POS system, tables and desks, front entrance, carts, registers and bathrooms with 1% sodium hypochlorite or phenolic disinfectants at regular intervals for the entire duration a store is open. The guidelines for preparing fresh 1% sodium hypochlorite solution is at **Annexure I**
- Frequent sanitisation of store premises at regular intervals to be carried out. Disinfection frequency and sanitisation guidelines can be found in **Annexure II**
- Provide Bio-Degradable gloves, masks to staff

- Place sanitizing hand rub dispensers at prominent places around the workplace
Make sure these dispensers are regularly refilled
- Ensure physical distancing by keeping a distance of at least 6 feet between employees
- Mandate the staff using public transport to sanitize themselves before entering the store
- Encourage customers to use cleaning stations to wipe trolleys, basket, etc.
- Ensure that items required to be kept in lockers such as mobile phones should be sanitised before keeping them in and after they are retrieved

Display, Merchandizing and Sampling

- Food & Grocery:
 - Pre-pack loose commodities to avoid contamination
 - Limit number of employees handling food items
 - Ensure close surveillance of employees handling food items for possible infections
 - Ensure all employees sanitize themselves before handling food items
 - Ensure adequate staffing in all sections especially those selling loose products and Fruits & Vegetables
 - Ensure employees assist customers in packing and picking the products
- Non-Food:
 - Ensure trial rooms are disinfected with spray, pre and post each customer trial to build customer confidence and for staff safety
 - Request customers to wait for 5 minutes to iron clothes, wherever possible, with availability of steam iron before packing, so that the product is free of contaminants
 - Ensure no customer or staff touches merchandise without proper sanitization
 - Encourage customers to only touch what they intend to purchase
 - Set up a process wherein tried garments are kept in dedicated trial rooms. Next morning, the garments from the previous day are to be steamed and put back on display
 - Set up a process wherein hangers are retrieved and kept in a separate carton marked 'TO BE SANITIZED' in the trial room aisle area. These hangers to be sanitized before reuse
 - Ensure trial room tokens are sanitized after every use
 - Restrict the number of items that can be exchanged / returned for online orders. Furthermore, set up proper procedure so that returns are thoroughly sanitized

Customer Sales

- Billing & Payment process
 - Encourage contactless payment options such as Paytm, Google Pay, UPI

- Mandate cashiers to extend a tray to receive or return currency / cards for payments
 - Ensure plenty of cash tills and mobile checkouts to reduce billing time
 - Adopt measures to sanitize cash before it gets accepted
 - Ensure cashiers wear gloves while dispensing cash
 - Replace physical bills with softcopy to be sent to customers via email / SMS
 - Allow customers to exit the store if there is no beep. Do away with bill punching / checking of carry bags post purchase
 - Direct customers to collect sanitised shopping bags from bag holder
- Billing & Other Staff
 - Make it mandatory for shop staff to wear face masks. Dispense with handshakes, use a non-contact method for greetings
 - Make it compulsory for employees to wash their hands when they arrive and every time they enter the premises, as well as frequently throughout the day

ADMIN / CENTRALIZED OPERATIONS

Overall Precautionary Measures

- Provide thermo-guns to screen all personnel for fever and Cold
- Get signed self-declarations (**Annexure-VII**) on health conditions by all personnel on a site
- Identify a room or area where someone who is feeling unwell or has symptoms can be safely isolated
- Create a Rapid Response Team of at least 2 managers who will monitor employees with infections / symptoms and will take necessary actions
- Conduct daily fever checks—Every individual to be checked for the body temperature through infrared thermometers without fail
- Make sanitizers available at all entry and exit points
- Defer joining of employees traveling using public transports such as train/bus/taxis/auto in the initial stages. Instruct employees commuting by their own vehicles to avoid using drivers

Social Distancing norms

- Define maximum occupancy for all buildings and enclosed areas
- Restrict gathering in groups; avoid any kind of meeting of more than 2-3 persons at a time
- Mandate employees to have lunch at their own work stations; no employee to be allowed to wash their lunch box in the wash basin

- Limit number of employees using washrooms at the same time to 2 people, forbid queuing at the entrance
 - Sanitary workers must use separate set of cleaning equipment for toilets (mops, nylon scrubber) and separate set for sink and commode). They should always wear disposable protective gloves while cleaning a toilet.
 - 70% Alcohol solution can be used to wipe down surfaces where the use of bleach is not suitable, e.g. metal. (Chloroxylenol (4.5-5.5%)/ Benzalkonium Chloride or any other disinfectants found to be effective against coronavirus may be used as per manufacturer's instructions)
 - Always use freshly prepared 1% sodium hypochlorite.
 - Do not use disinfectants spray on potentially highly contaminated areas (such as toilet bowl or surrounding surfaces) as it may create splashes which can further spread the virus.
 - To prevent cross contamination, discard cleaning material made of cloth (mop and wiping cloth) in appropriate bags after cleaning and disinfecting. Wear new pair of gloves and fasten the bag.
 - Disinfect all cleaning equipment after use and before using in other area
 - Disinfect buckets by soaking in bleach solution or rinse in hot water

Employee Working Cadence

- Cancel all non-critical meetings, recreational activities and corporate events
- Encourage remote working for as long as possible (Functions and Roles that can work effectively from home should be continued to Work From Home)
- Conduct virtual meetings using online apps/platforms (Skype, Zoom, Webex)
- Ensure that not more than 50% staff works from office
- Stagger shifts as much as possible to avoid over-lap
- In a meeting/conference/office room, if someone is coughing, without following respiratory etiquettes or mask, the areas around his/her seat should be vacated and cleaned with 1% sodium hypochlorite.

Employee Communication

- Put up signs and posters around the workplace to remind workers and others of the risks of COVID-19 and measures necessary to stop its spread
- Encourage employees to wash their hands with soap for 20 seconds before and after using wash rooms
- Provide all employees with training on preventing transmission of COVID-19, including initial and routine/refresher training
- Ensure frequent communication using WhatsApp and other communication tools
- Display posters promoting respiratory hygiene. Combine this with other communication measures such as guidance from occupational health and safety officers, briefing at meetings and information on intranet

Workplace Sanitization

- Ensure availability of face masks for employees coming to office
- Sanitizers to be placed in all departments in addition to reception desk
- Disinfect entire office twice a week, carry out fumigation of workplace on daily basis for first 14 days
- Disinfect frequently touched areas like reception, delivery areas and surfaces such as hand rails, door handle, push plates, telephone equipment, key boards, photocopy machines and other office equipment, toilet flush and seats at regular intervals

Cafeteria

- Conduct daily temperature screening of all cafeteria staff when they enter and exit the building
- Train office boys, kitchen helpers and canteen managers to ensure high-degree of personal hygiene and strict cleanliness
- Mandate cafeteria staff to sanitize themselves on a continuous basis and wear mask and gloves while preparing and serving food
- Introduce healthy menus for employees such as immunity-enhancing diet to build their immune system. Avoid serving any raw food such as salads
- Restrict the number of employees entering the cafeteria at one point of time to prevent gathering

Travel

- Suspend all non-essential travel and exercise strict caution in making travel plans to any region
- Put a blanket ban on all business travel unless approved by top management
- Avoid inviting vendors/contractors/customers from high risk locations/affected countries to office locations

ANNEXURES

Annexure I - Guidelines for Preparation of 1% sodium hypochlorite solution

Product	Available chlorine	1percent
Sodium hypochlorite – liquid bleach	3.5%	1 part bleach to 2.5 parts water
Sodium hypochlorite – liquid	5%	1 part bleach to 4 parts water
NaDCC (sodium dichloro-isocyanurate) powder	60%	17 grams to 1 litre water
NaDCC (1.5 g/ tablet) – tablets	60%	11 tablets to 1 litre water
Chloramine – powder	25%	80 g to 1 litre water
Bleaching powder	70%	7g g to 1 litre water
Any other	As per manufacturer's Instructions	

Annexure II - Disinfection Frequency and Sanitisation Guidelines

Area/Place	Disinfection Content	Disinfectant	Disinfection Method	Frequency
Work cell common surfaces	Including buttons, and other common surfaces	Hospital grade disinfectant or fresh 10% chlorine bleach solution (sodium hypochlorite solution), as appropriate	Spray with hand held sprayer or wipe	Minimum at the end of each shift
Offices, desk, and conference rooms	Table and chair surface		Spray with hand held sprayer or wipe	Minimum at the end of each shift
General objects often used or touched	Doors and windows, handles, faucets, sinks, and bathrooms		Spray with hand held sprayer or wipe	At least four times per day
Vending machines	Interface surfaces (pay, selection and vending surfaces)		Spray with sprayer	Daily
Transport vehicles	Common surfaces (e.g. seat surfaces rails, belts, door and window controls)		Spray with sprayer	After each use
All floors and walls	All general floors and walls at site		Mop	Periodic, where frequently touched; mop hard surfaces daily

Annexure III



IR Thermometer Checks – Preventive controls

Why: Using the infrared thermometer to check the body's temperature requires a short amount of time without the risk of cross-infection. Therefore it's well-suited for use in places with a high flow of people.

Wear Mask and simple goggles/ glasses while carrying out this operation.



1. Hold Scanner at 15cm to 20cm distance . Scan across the forehead from center to left or right
2. If the Temperature reads
 - 36°C(96.8°F) and below then its Normal
 - 36.1 °C (97°F) or above – Indication of Fever
 - Recheck again to conclude
3. If its above 36.1 °C (97°F) - It could be normal fever or just high body temperature. For preventive measure ask/request employee /customer to avoid entry.

Comparison	Regular Thermometer 		IR Thermometer 	
Measurement Method	Tongue/ Rectum/ Armpit	Oral	Ear	Forehead
Accuracy	High	High	High	Low
Convenience and speed	Average	Average	High	Very high
Reference level for Fever	>37.5 °C (99.5°F)	>37.5°C(99.5°F)	>38°C(100.4°F)	>36°C(96.8°F)

Comparison among different measurement methods (www.mdk.gov.hk), Department of Health

Annexure IV

Face Masks and its Important aspects

Type	Advantage	Duration	Filter level	Draw back
Cloth Mask	Washable	Can use whole day	80% of total atmospheric particle	Doesn't fit well. Allows air passage though gaps
Normal single layer PP Non-woven mask	Disposable	Breathing difficulty with prolonged use. More than 2 hours	Filters 90% of Atmospheric particle	Doesn't fit well. Allows air passage though gaps
3 ply mask (Non-woven)	Disposable	Breathing difficulty prolong use. More than 2 hours	Filters 90% of Atmospheric particle	Nose clip provision Fits well
P2.5 ,N95 mask	Usable as long as filter is not wet	Maximum 1 hour followed by normal breathing (without mask for an hour)	Filters 95% of 0.25 micron particles in the atmosphere	Breathing issue. Not recommended for Pregnant ladies and kids

Common issue with masks is that they typically have gaps between the face and the edges of the mask, that allows entrance of air and particles into the mask (and thus the user's respiratory system). Take care of following aspects while buying masks:

- All mask must have a Nose clip / adjustment provision to hold fit at the nose**
- Stretchable and adjustable loops or string tie which enables compact fixing of the edges with face to avoid exposure to airborne particles in those gaps**
- Reuse cloth mask – Wash regularly with detergent and dry before using**

Source: More Retail Limited

Annexure V

HOW TO WEAR A MEDICAL MASK SAFELY

who.int/epi-win

Dos →

- Wash your hands before touching the mask
- Inspect the mask for tears or holes
- Find the top side, where the metal piece or stiff edge is
- Ensure the colored-side faces outwards
- Place the metal piece or stiff edge over your nose
- Cover your mouth, nose, and chin
- Adjust the mask to your face without leaving gaps on the sides
- Avoid touching the mask
- Remove the mask from behind the ears or head
- Keep the mask away from you and surfaces while removing it
- Discard the mask immediately after use preferably into a closed bin
- Wash your hands after discarding the mask

Don'ts →

- Do not use a ripped or damp mask
- Do not wear the mask only over mouth or nose
- Do not wear a loose mask
- Do not touch the front of the mask
- Do not remove the mask to talk to someone or do other things that would require touching the mask
- Do not leave your used mask within the reach of others
- Do not re-use the mask

Remember that masks alone cannot protect you from COVID-19. Maintain at least 1 metre distance from others and wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, even while wearing a mask.

EPI-WIN 

Source: World Health Organisation (WHO)

Annexure VI

Hand-washing technique with soap and water

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1 Wet hands with water.
- 

2 Apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces.
- 

3 Rub hands palm to palm.
- 

4 Rub back of each hand with palm of other hand with fingers interlaced.
- 

5 Rub palm to palm with fingers interlaced.
- 

6 Rub with back of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked.
- 

7 Rub each thumb clasped in opposite hand using a rotational movement.
- 

8 Rub tips of fingers in opposite palm in a circular motion.
- 

9 Rub each wrist with opposite hand.
- 

10 Rinse hands with water.
- 

11 Use elbow to turn off tap.
- 

12 Dry thoroughly with a single-use towel.
- 

13 Hand washing should take 15-30 seconds.

Annexure VII – Format for Self Declaration Form

COVID-19 Employee Self-Declaration Form

The safety of our employees remains the company's primary concern. To help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the potential risk of exposure to our employees we are conducting a simple screening questionnaire. Your participation is important to help us take precautionary measures to protect you and everyone in the building.

Thank you for your time and co-operation.

Contact Information

Name:

Mobile No:

Email:

Store Location:

Employee Details

Employee ID:

If the answer to question 1 below is yes, access to the store will be denied.

1. Are you showing any signs of one or more of the following symptoms? Temperature >38°C (100.4 °F) or higher, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, tiredness?

YES NO

2. Is the information you provided on this form true and correct to the best of your knowledge?

YES

3. Did you come in contact with someone having COVID-19 symptoms during last 14 days?

YES NO

.....
Signature